

RESTORATION UPDATE

A newsletter on the Salton Sea Restoration Project

Salton Sea Authority

May 2004

www.saltonsea.ca.gov

Authority Endorses Restoration Project Concept

Decades of talk about ways to save the Salton Sea turned to action in late April with the Salton Sea Authority's official endorsement of a restoration project. The \$730 million approximate project cost is far below previous projections.

The Authority concept is based around an 8-mile causeway that would split the Salton Sea into two smaller bodies of water: an 85,000 acre North Basin that would be about as salty as the ocean, and a southern section that would consist of wetlands areas as well as numerous recreational lakes ranging from fresh water to hyper saline. Engineers with over 450 years of experience in similar marine construction recently gave the project a "thumbs-up" for its feasibility.

What is lost in size by dividing the Sea into two will be picked up in quality as a result of reduced salinity, greatly expanded shallow water wetlands and habitat, improvements to the New and Alamo River inflows via reduced nutrient inflows, and other plan features.

"This concept, brought forward by Congresswoman Mary Bono and others, puts all the pieces together at a much more



View of proposed causeway at the Salton Sea.

affordable cost than we've ever seen before," said Authority Board Chairman Andy Horne.

"Unlike some of the more narrowly targeted suggestions that have been put forward, the project we are proposing accomplishes the broad environmental and economic goals that were first established by the Authority and federal law when this process began," he said.

Horne, a member of the Imperial Irrigation District Board of Directors,

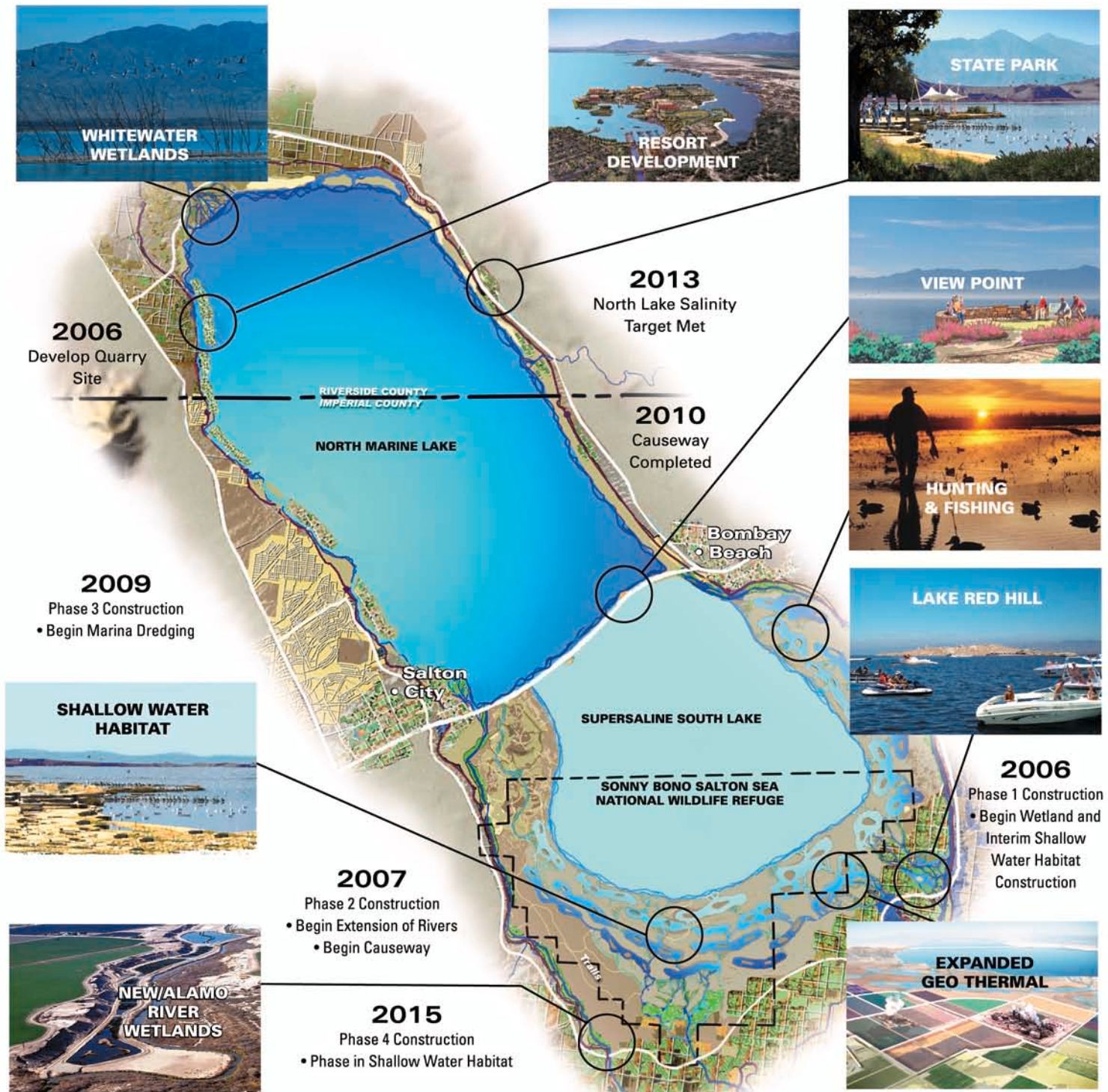
noted that action to identify a specific project came less than 18 months from the date when the Authority stepped forward to take the lead in the restoration effort.

The Authority has now turned its focus to working with the state and federal government to align objectives, define joint work programs and identify funding to implement the project.

The project has been presented to the
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Salton Sea Restoration Concept

APRIL 2004



2004

- Federal, State and Local (SSA) agencies pledge to Work together on restoration, enter an MOU
- State Advisory Committee develops criteria and reviews alternatives
- Begin detailed design

2005

- SSA establishes Tax Increment District
- Draft Project-Level Salton Sea Restoration EIR/EIS
- Final Project-Level Salton Sea Restoration EIR/EIS

2006

- Complete detailed design
- Mitigation water sold

For more information, contact the
Salton Sea Authority
at (760) 564-4888.
<http://saltonsea.ca.gov>

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state Salton Sea Advisory Committee established by the Department of Water Resources to review restoration alternatives. The Salton Sea Authority is proposing to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the state and the federal government to complete the project.

The Salton Sea Authority is a joint powers agency made up of the Imperial and Riverside counties as well as the Imperial Irrigation District, the Coachella Valley Water District and the Torres Martinez Desert Cahuilla Tribe.

The Salton Sea Authority voted in January 2003 to jump-start the Salton Sea Restoration effort by retaining its own engineers and designers to help design a restoration plan.

The project that was approved April 22 is a product of that effort. It takes into

Salton Sea Authority Next Steps

- Align state, federal and local goals and work plans
- Seek MOU
- Peer review
- Refine engineering
- Implement water quality projects
- Begin shallow water habitat projects
- Pursue funding options

account the substantially reduced inflows created by water transfers and other factors.

The series of shallow water wetlands areas in the southern portion of the current lake would become habitat for fish and the many bird species that populate the lake.

An Outdoor Recreation Committee, consisting of local Salton Sea enthusiasts and experts, is currently developing a series of recreational recommendations. Their findings will be presented to the Authority board in June.

“I am thrilled that the Authority has stepped up to take the lead on this,” said Committee Chair Lea Anne O’Malley Miller, a member of the Calipatria City Council.

“This plan will allow the Sea to realize its potential and will help spark economic development that is so drastically needed in our region,” she said. “Most importantly, it will allow the Sea to remain a viable resource for agricultural, environmental and recreational uses.”

Draft preferred project report available for review and download at www.saltonsea.ca.gov

Key Features

The Main Lake

85,000 Acres
Ocean Salinity

Other Recreational Lakes

Red Hill Lake
Larger than every Imperial Valley Lake combined

Peninsulas

Dredging to create/enhance perimeter
Development/Torres Martinez development opportunities

New/Alamo/Whitewater Wetlands

4,000 Acres of Wetlands
Water quality improvement and habitat

Shallow Wetlands

20,000 wet areas for birds
Two to three times more than existing
Reclaim flooded refuge areas

Geothermal Expansion

1400 MW expansion possibility
Triple existing generation

Other Opportunities

Hiking/Equestrian Trails
Greatly expanded hunting opportunities
Golfing
Salt Pond
57,000 Acres
Hundreds of years of on-site storage

Dust Control

Strategic placement of water features
Use of salt ponds

Water Transfer/Desalting

Plan Only Requires 800,000 AF/YR water
500,000 AF/YR less than historic
Accommodates QSA water transfers
Accommodates additional transfers/desalting

MEETINGS SCHEDULE

Board of Directors

May 27, 10:00am
Torres Martinez Indian Reservation - Thermal

Technical Advisory Meeting

June 10, 10:30am
Salton Sea Community Service District -
Salton City



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